

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 222

By Harwell

A RESOLUTION recognizing George Langstaff for his many contributions to the State of Tennessee and its students.

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly recognize those Tennesseans who, through their commitments to serving the needs of their communities, have founded noteworthy organizations that provide necessary support to students in need, giving them access to educational opportunities which would otherwise be outside of their grasp; and

WHEREAS, George Langstaff is one such sterling individual who, since founding The Sponsors Scholarship Program in 1995, has enabled more than 400 students to attend college on the strength of scholarships provided by the organization; and

WHEREAS, more than twenty years ago, Mr. Langstaff retired from the shoe business, but he found himself consumed with a problem: that of far too many underprivileged, financially challenged young people being unable to attain an education following graduation from high school, thereby robbing them of the opportunity of improving their economic circumstances and becoming productive members of their communities; and

WHEREAS, in his search for a solution to this problem, George Langstaff devised an ingenious approach. He founded the The Sponsors in an effort to identify young people of promise from disadvantaged neighborhoods who, with encouragement and financial assistance, could obtain an education after high school; and

WHEREAS, initially organized with Bill Weaver's support under Time to Rise, The Sponsors, with its initial core group of ten couples who made a significant fiscal contribution in the early days of the program, developed and expanded its program. Under Mr. Langstaff's

astute and careful guidance, the program grew into an all-volunteer organization comprising more than 350 individuals and twenty-one foundations who provide support; and

WHEREAS, it was in 2005 that The Sponsors earned its status as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; and

WHEREAS, over the past twenty years, The Sponsors has administered its scholarship program with less than 5% overhead, meaning that more than 95 cents of each dollar goes directly toward the scholarship recipients, and the program has been able to provide more than \$2.5 million in scholarship support since 1996; and

WHEREAS, this financial scholarship support has been given each year to financially disadvantaged students who have been nominated by school counselors and youth organizations based on criteria established by The Sponsors organization and, in addition to the financial support, The Sponsors provides college counseling and transition seminars each fall and spring and friendship mentors to provide support to each student, many of whom are the first in their families to pursue education after high school; and

WHEREAS, the business model devised by George Langstaff and the board of The Sponsors has gained recognition and acclaim from many other organizations and groups, several of which have adopted its program policies; and

WHEREAS, over the past twenty years, The Sponsors has made significant and worthwhile contributions to the lives of the individuals who have participated in its scholarship program, as well as to the improvement of many of Tennessee's communities, which have benefited from the contributions of the many college graduates who attended and graduated from college with the help and guidance offered by Mr. Langstaff and the many volunteers who dedicate their time and energies to The Sponsors; and

WHEREAS, it is wholly fitting that we recognize George Langstaff for his dedication to helping Tennessee's best and brightest achieve their goals; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize and commend George Langstaff, founder of The

Sponsors Scholarship Program, for his tireless and unwavering dedication to Tennessee's students, applaud the many sterling contributions made by his foundation, and extend our best wishes for his continued success and happiness in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.